

School Readiness Initiative

Zambia

2019-2026

The goal of the School Readiness Initiative of the Roger Federer Foundation is to secure a good start into primary education for vulnerable children, giving them access to quality pre-primary schooling in community schools. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4.2, which states that all children need to be ready for school.

Number of targeted beneficiaries by 2026:

- 228,000 children
- 2,000 early childhood development (ECD) teachers
- 2,000 community schools
- 200,000 parents

Total investment:
CHF 10.5 million



Zambia's commitment to school readiness

The Government is making strides to ensuring the provision of early childhood education services to all children. Today, most early childhood development centres are still located in urban areas, which means that **94% of vulnerable children in rural areas are left out.**

The Ministry of Education has started recruiting more early childhood education teachers in order to address the high teacher-learner ratio of **1 to 80** pupils. However, there are **not enough teachers to meet the growing demand.** Untrained volunteer caregivers, yet to be qualified, make up a large proportion of the workforce in rural areas.

The allocation for early childhood education in the 2023 budget has almost tripled in relation to the 2022 budget. Despite this improvement, the **budget** is still far below the recommended benchmark of 10% of the education budget in order to meet the needs on the ground.

Objectives of the School Readiness Initiative

Establish processes of joint responsibility

We seek to engage all relevant stakeholders such as parents, communities, community leaders, community teachers on early childhood development level as well of lower grades, Parents Community School Committees, District Education Board Secretary's office, the District Resource Centre Coordinators, the Zonal In-service Coordinators and the Provincial Education Officer and relevant Ministries. The aim is to mobilise them to offer a better early learning environment and a high-quality start to education.

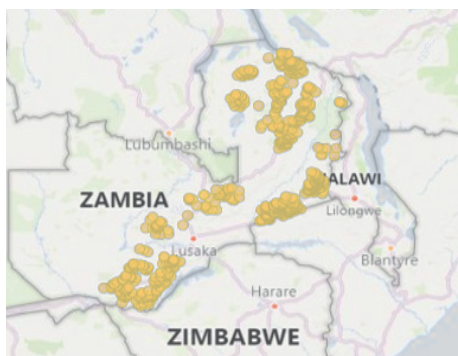


Scale access to quality early learning environments:

Since the launch of the School Readiness Initiative, enrolment has increased by 57%. Contributing factors:

- The establishment of traditional round-hut ECE centres constructed by the communities.
- The construction of attractive Play Parks by the communities with locally sourced materials.
- Availability of teachers for early childhood education classes: All the schools have assigned staff.
- The installment of trained ECE management committees to run the ECE centres effectively.
- The launch of Teacher Incentive Funds, which is seed capital to provide loans to teachers and community members to start small businesses. This generates income for the ECE centres to cover salaries and other expenses.

Facilities ● School



Our reach as of 2023

Enhance competency of ECE/Grade 1 teachers:

Our Early Learning Kiosk tablet, which can also be used offline, comes preloaded with tools and apps that capacitate educators in early childhood education. It features a digital self-guided course on early teaching (KnowHow). Teachers also take part in group meetings, both at school and zonal levels, to exchange ideas and improve one another's skills. Experienced mentors pass on their skills and knowledge to volunteer teachers. The Kiosk also offers the ChildSteps app to continuously monitor each child's development. Other apps and tools focus on working with parents, the curriculum and how to produce learning materials and construct playgrounds, among others.



Partners



Status of the initiative April 2023



29,964 children

have been reached, with 57% increased enrolment.



1,782 ECE teachers

were trained to use the Early Learning Kiosk.



728 institutions

are taking part in the programme.



100% of institutions

are engaged in regular dialogue with parents.

More information:



<https://bit.ly/3PRgDhP>

Contact:
Martha Khonje
Regional Office
Roger Federer Foundation
Johannesburg, South Africa
martha.khonje@rogerfederer.com

